

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

(May 10 – November 10, 2002)

COMMUNITY ACTION INVESTMENT PROGRAM (CAIP) TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN, UZBEKISTAN

Cooperative Agreement 122-A-00-02-00017-00



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mercy Corps was awarded a cooperative agreement for the Community Action Investment Program (CAIP) on May 10, 2002.

After six-months of initial start-up and implementation, Mercy Corps' CAIP project has successfully created a strong vehicle for community mobilization in areas of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and is working steadily toward the long-term goal of mitigating conflict.

The project's organizational framework is in place, with a clear emphasis on staff and field offices located close to the communities in which CAIP works. In all three countries, communities have been selected according to conflict criteria, community workshops have been held, and projects have been implemented by newly formed Community Action Groups and, in the case of Tajikistan, Project Implementation Teams.

The methodology adopted by Mercy Corps for the CAIP program focuses on active participation and strengthening the capacity of communities and Community Groups. A detailed description of the process used to identify and engage communities is outlined in the section on Community Mobilization.

Additional sites for each country will be proposed by the end of the year; in Tajikistan ten, and in Uzbekistan nine. In Turkmenistan, additional sites will also be proposed in December, with further site recommendations by the end of February 2003.

Programmatic expansions for the next phase of CAIP implementation will include Community Development Contracts in addition to small-scale and larger-scale infrastructure projects.

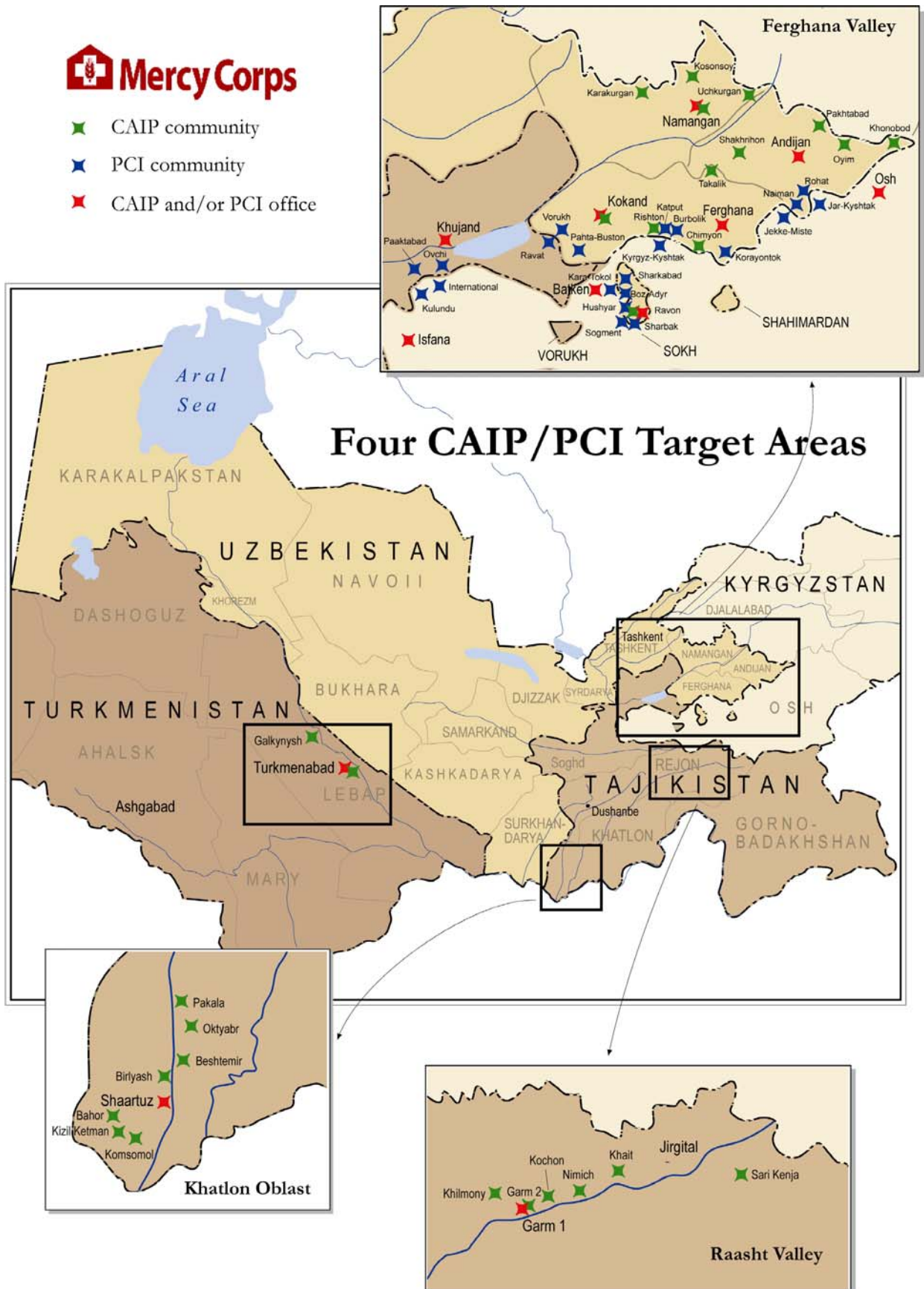
A note about CAIP and PCI integration: CAIP and PCI adopted an integrated management structure in September, which has been described in a separate document *CAIP and PCI Integration*, submitted to USAID November 29th. Since CAIP and PCI operate under separate cooperative agreements, they have separate reporting schedules. PCI has recently submitted an annual report to USAID. This report covers only CAIP activities.

The following report details the process by which Mercy Corps identified and engaged communities, and outlines plans for expanding community outreach and programmatic interventions, as well as site expansion to meet the number of communities targeted in the Technical Application.

Note: The map on the following page illustrates the current 29 approved CAIP sites as well as the PCI sites.



- CAIP community
- PCI community
- CAIP and/or PCI office



1. PROGRESS TOWARDS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Objective 1 (USAID Intermediate Result #1): Participatory and democratic processes strengthened at the community level.

Planned: Under the current cooperative agreement, in a three-year period CAIP will work in 56 communities in three countries (25 in Tajikistan, 10 in Turkmenistan, and 21 in Uzbekistan).

Achieved: At the six-month mark, CAIP is working in 29 approved communities, with 22 new communities in Tajikistan (10), Uzbekistan (9), and Turkmenistan (3) expected to be approved by the end of this calendar year, and the remaining 5 communities in Turkmenistan approved in early 2003. In all of the approved communities, CAGs are actively engaged in planning and implementing first round projects. The community mobilization teams work on a weekly basis with CAGs building capacity on an as needed basis on topics such as: participatory facilitation, action planning methodology, project design, budgeting, procurement processes, community outreach, and transparency/accountability. Region-wide, CAG membership is currently approximately 348 people, with excellent participation of young people and women (approximately 40 percent).

Objective 2 (USAID Intermediate Result #2): Improved community social services through improved infrastructure.

Planned: In the course of the three-year project period, over 392,000 beneficiaries will have access to better quality health, education, medical, recreational, water and/or similar services through the provision of improved infrastructure, human and physical resources. Community ownership and responsibility will be ensured through existing or new community associations, maintenance committees, and user groups/associations.

Achieved: As of the six-month mark, CAIP has 13 small infrastructure projects in process or completed in 13 communities across three countries (including 4 pilot projects and 4 PCI projects leveraging CAIP funds). In addition, 28 projects are in the review process, pending formal approval. These projects are improving important social services with medical clinics, schools, community centers, and the provision of gas, electricity, and water (irrigation and drinking). To date, the total value of completed/in process infrastructure projects is \$58,249, reaching 27,085 beneficiaries.

Objective 3 (USAID Intermediate Result #3): Creation of sustainable and short-term jobs.

Planned: By the end of the three-year period, at least 56 communities will benefit from increased or sustained job opportunities and incomes through employment on infrastructure projects and participation in community development projects, with a particular focus on youth and women.

Achieved: At the six-month mark, we are working in 29 communities, and have begun to look at sustainability and job creation components to maximize our impact as the project cycle goes forward. The familiarity our field teams now have with the many issues affecting these communities will prove invaluable when forming Community Development Committees to

address local business needs and employment opportunities. Now that the first-stage community mobilization process is nearing completion, attention can be turned towards business and economic development in CAIP and surrounding communities.

2. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The first six months of CAIP implementation have centered around community outreach, community selection and approval, first-stage mobilization activities, capacity-building of CAIP national field staff, and preliminary capacity-building of CAGs.

2.1 Community Selection

Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Mercy Corps' community selection process considered potential for conflict first and foremost. We support the assertion that the potential for conflict in urban areas is usually higher than in isolated rural areas. Consequently, we have paid particular attention to singling out urban and semi-urban areas with substantial youth unemployment or other tension-prone features.

Key community selection criteria considered were:

- past incidents of conflict in the community (protests, demonstrations, violence, etc.);
- a lack of equity in the provision of social services (particularly if one ethnic group fared better than another);
- a large group of unemployed young people (perhaps created by the closure or production cut-backs at a factory which was the main source of employment in the community);
- lack of opportunities for higher education;
- lack of employment opportunities for those who have attained higher education;
- presence (often rumored) of extremist groups;
- frustration expressed by a lack of responsiveness from the local government to addressing issues in the community.

Community selection resulted from the following process:

1. A Potential Conflict (or Tension) Guideline was developed from USAID's Tension Index, highlighting the aforementioned criteria, and adapted for use by our community mobilization teams (the complete index can be found in Attachment 2);
2. Desk studies of likely communities were pursued relying on information from within Mercy Corps and regional experts, including regional and local government sources, government demographic and socio-economic statistical data, International Crisis Group reports, international and national NGOs, and other implementing agencies;

3. Participatory Rapid Appraisals (PRAs) were conducted at sites that had been identified in the previous step; assessments were documented in a standardized Community Profile (included as Attachment 3);
4. The entire CAIP national team was presented with Community Profiles prepared by the community mobilization teams who presented arguments in favor of and against each community; participants then voted on which communities to submit to USAID for approval;
5. Recommendations were forwarded to USAID for approval; in Tajikistan, the CAIP team worked with the two other CAIP Implementing Partners to assure that no overlap would occur for CAIP-funded activities at the village level.



As emphasized in our Work Plan, no mechanically applied rule can produce a “correct” selection. We believe that this inclusive and participatory process, which included numerous visits to each site, in tandem with the on-going dialogue with USAID, has succeeded in identifying communities suitable for CAIP efforts.

As a result of this community selection process, the following communities were approved by USAID:

Tajikistan		District
<i>Khatlon Oblast</i>		
1	Birlyash	Shaartuz
2	Shaartuz	Shaartuz
3	Beshtemir	Khobodian
4	Pakala	Khobodian
5	Oktyabr	Khobodian
6	Bahor	Beshkent
7	Kizil Ketmen	Beshkent
8	Komsomol	Beshkent
<i>Raasht Valley</i>		
9	Garm Northwest	Garm
10	Garm Southeast	Garm
11	Khoit	Garm
12	Khilmony	Garm
13	Nimich	Garm
14	Kochon	Garm
15	Sari Kenji	Jirgital

Uzbekistan		Raion
<i>Andijan Oblast</i>		
1	Mustaquillik	Khonobod
2	Uzbekiston	Oyim
3	Besharik	Shahrihan
4	Sohil	Pahtaabod
<i>Ferghana Oblast</i>		
5	Nowobod/Yangiarik	Sokh
6	Yangi Chorsu	Kokand
7	Takalik	Yozyovon
8	Qozi Ahror	Rishtan
<i>Namangan Oblast</i>		
9	5 Yilli Mustaqullik	Namangan
10	Qoraqorgon	Varzik
11	Obod	Kosonsoy
12	Sohil	Uchkurgan
Turkmenistan (Lebap Velayat)		Etrap
1	Turkmenabat	Serderabat
2	Galkynysh	Galkynysh

In Tajikistan, CAIP works in the Raasht Valley and Shaartuz area. In those two regions, the civil war has left a legacy of ethnic tension, collapsed or destroyed infrastructure, and scarce resources that contributes to widespread and significant potential for conflict throughout the region. CAIP

is working in the regional centers of Shaartuz and Garm, as well as in smaller, less densely populated communities, targeting those sites where conflict indicators are highest and isolation is lowest.

In Uzbekistan, CAIP concentrates its efforts on densely populated communities with populations of at least 10,000, avoiding towns that are isolated or primarily agricultural. We selected areas which serve as transportation or market hubs, and places to which people tend to migrate, particularly young men looking for work. Our reasoning was that unemployed, disenfranchised young men are often disaffected and dissatisfied with the level of service from the government, and may be ready targets for extremist groups seeking to recruit new members. As a result of these analyses, 80% of CAIP communities in Uzbekistan are considered to be urban or semi-urban. While poverty was not one of the required criteria, we acknowledge that poverty is widely understood to be one of the root causes of conflict, and is indeed present in all our sites.

Turkmenistan

To accommodate the environment of tight political control and apprehension about community-work in Turkmenistan, CAIP's initial community outreach in this country has taken a slightly different route emphasizing more democratic and transparent practices. Rather than approaching communities head-on, upon consultation with local government officials, the CAIP team contacted particular institutions in order to work with stakeholders and beneficiaries (e.g. parents, teachers, and pupils at a school). This institutional or stakeholder approach relies on a mobilization methodology similar to the one used for communities. It has built trust and confidence in the community at large, as well as vis-à-vis government authorities. This approach has paved the way for participatory community assessments that have resulted in the approval of two communities. At this point, CAIP is working with two community groups in Galkynysh and Turkmenabat, and with stakeholders of four institutions within the two communities. CAIP is currently assessing additional communities such as Farap and Darganata.

2.2 Community Mobilization

Our community mobilization process has followed a general paradigm that has been successfully adopted by Mercy Corps in other countries, e.g. Georgia, and in Central Asia. While differences do exist, the core ideas remain, irrespective of particular contexts:

For work in any particular community, the first step is to inform the relevant authorities, to solicit endorsement and to make clear that CAIP efforts are not aimed at replacing, but rather



working with, authorities and elected bodies. The next step is devoted to using participatory techniques such as focus groups and informal interviews to identify a representative group of community residents (40 – 70 people suitably mixed in terms of gender, age and occupation) to participate in a community meeting devoted to assessing and prioritizing projects that will improve community life. We call these initial community meetings “consensus workshops.”

Uzbekistan

This first community meeting – the Consensus Workshop – is conducted in a fully open and transparent manner with the explicit objective of selecting one or several projects, and electing a Community Action Group (CAG) that will serve as a voluntary non-paid coordinating body for community work. The Consensus Workshop uses participatory methodology to encourage all participants to voice opinions and work together to agree on the needs of their community. Attachment 4 provides a summary of a particular community workshop from Uzbekistan.

At the Consensus Workshop, a significant amount of time is devoted to a discussion of how CAIP works with CAGs. Without exception, the communities Mercy Corps has selected have little or no experience in working with international (or even national) NGOs. Therefore, it takes some time for the participants of the meeting to grasp what CAIP is proposing, and to consider how the community can come together to make decisions on prioritizing needs and implementing projects. The facilitation process utilized by Mercy Corps community development officers (CDOs), leads to the formation of a CAG, the prioritization of community needs, and the selection of a first-round project at the very first Consensus Workshop.

Discussions of project options include commitments on the part of the community to in-kind and in-cash resources for completing the project. This matching contribution should be a minimum of 30% of total costs for each single project. CAIP experience to date has shown that beneficiaries understand the need for contributing themselves, they are willing and able to contribute, and they even take pride in making a contribution.

Community Workshop: Rishtan



Shortly after the introduction by Community Development Officer Iqbol Ahadjanov, there was a slight commotion in the back of the room as a man entered, followed by a man with a video camera. Hesitant to interrupt the momentum of the meeting, the team proceeded with instructions for the first activity, and analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the community. While the community members began to work, the CAIP team spoke with the man and found out that he was the Hakim of Rishtan, and that he had brought along a cameraman so that he could learn to use CAIP's participatory methods in his own work. The Hakim stayed for the duration of the meeting, participating actively, and was eventually elected to the Community Action Group.

Project planning activities follow within days of the workshop, thus quickly creating commitments and credibility. This immediate and consistent follow-up is crucial to building the necessary relationship of trust between CAIP and the community. The professionalism demonstrated to the community by Mercy Corps CDOs in this process has already had a positive influence on the seriousness with which the CAGs view their role, and the way the CAGs relate to the wider community. Many workshop participants have pointed out the immediate link between discussion and follow-up action as the single most important trust-builder for our work.

Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, the CAIP team and collaborating communities have established a two-tier structure for community work. A CAG is elected to act as an administrative and coordination body for project work. Several communities that were contacted during our assessment phase already had in place an informal community coordinating committee for international development work. In other communities, a four-member formal village organization had been formed. Thus the CAG builds upon what is already in place; its 10-12 members incorporate diverse interests of the community, and include adequate representation of women. For the implementation of particular projects, the community meeting selects members of a Project Implementation Team (PIT) at the same time as projects are determined. A PIT is the implementation management group for a particular project.

This two-tier set-up of elected and un-paid bodies aims at reducing the required and frequently quite substantial time-commitment of each individual CAG member. Project specific PITs are able to incorporate specialized skills and bring pertinent perspectives to bear on individual project work (e.g. inclusion of young people for the rehabilitation of a youth center). Additionally, they are able to ensure, in a structured manner, more participation and learning-by-doing skill development. Frequently, projects will require the formation of a formal or semi-formal network to ensure that the rehabilitated infrastructure remains fully operational, e.g. a water user association after completion of an irrigation project. The PIT is one instrument to increase chances of successful monitoring and follow-up work.

In Tajikistan, the combined CAG/PIT construction is well-suited to accommodate the fact that in many communities, other international NGOs are pursuing or preparing community projects based on participatory approaches. The CAG works as an overall coordinating body vis-à-vis local and regional authorities and development agencies. Communities can set up PITs to work on specific projects through their entire life-cycle, tailoring mandates and membership to the particular task at hand. Attachment 5 provides a summary of a particular community workshop from Tajikistan.

Turkmenistan

In Turkmenistan, as has been noted previously, the CAIP team has used the mobilization of institutions (schools and hospitals) to establish CAIP in the target region. This approach has met with success in the first four institutional settings, and has now led to community-wide mobilizations. The results of these early efforts have helped to alleviate fears of community

members and allowed them to openly discuss their problems and possible solutions, though this aspect of community work remains a challenge.

Inclusion of Women and Youth

Mobilization efforts have consistently sought to include women, and across the three countries, the participation of women has varied. With a few exceptions, women's participation at community meetings has averaged above 40%. In Tajikistan, half of CAG members are women. In Turkmenistan, approximately 40% of initiative group members are women, with 30% in Uzbekistan, while CAIP teams continue to reach out to include more women and young people. Statistics of gender composition can easily be misleading because membership does not tell much about actual influence and on-going involvement. CAIP will continue to make sure that women and youth are truly involved in decision-making.



The CAIP team includes a Youth Opportunities Officer (through a partnership between Mercy Corps and World Education) who ensures that youth participation is a central element of all community mobilization activities. Our goal is not to develop a parallel youth program, rather we seek to develop ways for youth to be substantively involved in the decision-making process of the community. In the first six months of project implementation, the Youth Opportunities Officer conducted youth assessments in all three CAIP countries, working in tandem with CAIP community development officers (CDOs) to develop mechanisms for the inclusion of youth in the implementation of community infrastructure projects. In addition, a representative from World Education headquarters assisted CAIP managers in designing ways for youth to be active participants in CAGs, gaining credibility with adults in the community, and empowering youth to take responsibility for their future. The Youth Opportunities Officer also provides support to CDOs in all community mobilization activities, particularly in fine-tuning skills in participation methods.

2.3 Lessons Learned in Community Mobilization

Elements of our community approach have been new to many of the communities, particularly in Uzbekistan where even the term “NGO” was unfamiliar. In other cases, our approach has been introduced in communities that were already accustomed to other ways of collaborating with development agencies, particularly in Tajikistan.

- ***Understanding the needs of the community:*** In Uzbekistan, building on the experience of PCI, CAIP teams visited each community numerous times during the needs assessment phase, using Participatory Rapid Appraisal techniques to gain a complete picture of the needs of each community. In doing so, CAIP teams were able to identify non-infrastructure needs, such as job creation for youth and women, and improved educational resources. A more complete picture of the needs of the community allows CAIP to increase the effectiveness of community mobilization by improving the team's ability to tailor training and programmatic

activities to target the most pressing needs of the community. In Tajikistan, teams have been able to rely on ongoing and previous Mercy Corps work.

- ***General acceptance of community work among authorities:*** The community mobilization approach introduces an understanding of civil society based upon open and unrestricted discussion, transparent procedures, and plurality-based decisions. As might be expected, while authorities have generally expressed support for this work, occasionally realities have differed a bit from verbal endorsements. In some cases, endorsements from city level authorities have not been matched by mahalla level leaders, but in all cases, full support has been given once the authorities have seen the community workshops take place and learned more about the goals and approach of CAIP.
- ***Fair representation of interests respected in communities:*** In Uzbekistan, as described in Attachment 4, one community workshop had to be arranged a second-time because the first meeting revealed that participation did not accurately reflect the needs community – in this case, a community whose needs are very much linked to their geography. When it was discovered that all stakeholders were not equally represented, a second community meeting was held so that a vote could be taken with all streets equally represented. The story illustrates the attention being paid by CAIP teams to the integrity of the mobilization process and the importance of understanding the specific issues in each community.
- ***Voluntary work is accepted by all socio-economic segments:*** Asking community members to contribute a significant amount of unpaid time to the Community Action Groups was expected to possibly prohibit the participation of some individuals facing financial hardship. Though socio-economic bias towards volunteer work exists in all societies, this has been much less of an issue than we anticipated. Our experience so far suggests that voluntary project work can even co-exist in communities where other international NGOs are directly paying for labor, for example in Tajikistan. Regardless, we continue to monitor this closely.
- ***Matching contributions are exceeded by communities:*** The requirement of matching contributions from the community has done much to ensure that CAIP activities are addressing wider community needs, as opposed to narrow interests. We have found that beneficiaries are able and willing to contribute and understand the need for contributing themselves, and take pride in making a contribution. In one community where other non-USAID funded organizations operate with no matching requirements, more than 40% of project costs were committed. These other implementing agencies are now considering the introduction of a matching requirement based upon Mercy Corps' experience elsewhere and early community outreach in Tajikistan.
- ***Maximizing impact in urban areas through working in adjacent mahallas:*** Working in densely populated urban areas presents unique challenges for community mobilization work. The size of the city and the complicated administrative structures in place can make project implementation difficult, and the nature of urban areas tends to see communities that are less



cohesive than in rural areas. Additionally, measuring the impact of working in mahallas in a large urban center can be difficult. As such, CAIP teams in Uzbekistan have begun to expand their programs in major population centers by working in more than one mahalla and by planning projects that will be able to bridge communities within cities so as to broaden the impact of CAIP in these areas.

- ***Multiple development instruments desirable:*** In several community workshops, participants have singled out projects that are more appropriate for micro-finance solutions, rather than social-infrastructure grants, because normal commercial activities are involved. In many communities residents know little or nothing about micro-credit opportunities. For this reason, mobilization teams will have access to information that will permit prospective applicants to apply for credit through micro-credit schemes run by Mercy Corps or other agencies. In several cases, we have encountered situations where a combination of infrastructure investment and business support is required to overcome bottlenecks. Such interventions lie at the heart of our Development Contract approach and will be pursued once we have gained more experience in the communities.

- ***In Turkmenistan, balance maintained between stakeholders and government officials in project work:*** In Turkmenistan, we have noticed that communities tend to select low level government officials and other authority figures to make up most of their initiative groups. Ironically, these individuals tend to be the same individuals who have not addressed



community problems in the past. This membership puts very little decision-making into the hands of community members, stakeholders and beneficiaries, and perpetuates the use of traditional strategies of position and relationships to get things accomplished. CAIP has addressed this problem by spending substantial time describing the role and responsibilities of institution-based or community action groups. Also, membership of

the community action group has been restricted to individuals who live in the community. We are deliberately working to ensure the selection of active concerned citizens rather than “experts” or those who have powerful official or unofficial connections to the local or regional government. In this process, we believe that the CAIP staff has been able to maintain a delicate balance between ensuring that initiative groups are not dominated by outside interests while not creating the perception that members are selected by CAIP.

“Do it ourselves”

As participants at a community meeting in Turkmenistan were listing what the community could contribute to build new toilet facilities, one man stood up and said, “Wait a minute, we have everything we need to do this project ourselves!” Realizing that they can do it for themselves is the essence of community mobilization.

2.4 Community Infrastructure Projects

Community work comprises both social infrastructure projects, and training and other skills-building initiatives in connection with the implementation of these projects. Our work plan for the first six months planned for the 31 small infrastructure projects to be completed or underway (determined by the date the project agreements are signed), including first-round projects in each CAIP community, plus a second-round project in several communities.

At the six-month mark, we have a total of 10 completed projects: 2 first-round projects in Tajikistan, 4 pilot projects in Uzbekistan, and 4 projects completed through the leveraging of CAIP funds on PCI projects in the Uzbekistan part of the Ferghana Valley. In Tajikistan, an additional 3 communities have signed project agreements for first-round projects. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, all of our communities have at least one project under review (planning and budgeting underway, agreement not yet signed). In Turkmenistan the team is ready to sign four Project Agreements with the community and/or stakeholders but is waiting for confirmation of status as a USAID grantee by the Hakim's Office, based upon letter from USAID/CAR that now has been sent through the Turkmenistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs to this office.

In addition, all of our communities have selected the first-round projects to be implemented, all of which are in various stages of planning. In almost all communities, second-round projects have been identified. In total, as of November 10th, Mercy Corps CAIP has completed 10 projects, formally approved an additional 3 projects, and has 28 projects pending approval.

Table 1: Summary of current status of project implementation:

	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Grand Total
Total Planned by Project Mid-Year (project completed or project agreement signed)	13	5	13	31
Total (project completed or project agreement signed)	5	0	8 (4 pilots, 4 CAIP/PCI)	13
Total projects under formal review, pending approval	12	4	12	28
	17	4	20	41

Table 2: Summary of completed projects, and projects for which MoUs have been signed and ground-breaking has taken place.

Community	Project	Total cost USD*	Beneficiaries
Tajikistan			
Birlyash	Auto bridge construction	\$1,833	5000
Kochon	Walking bridge construction	\$3,522	2000
Khilmony	Auto bridge construction	\$3,806	2500
Garm NW	Renovation and construction of 3 latrines	\$4,274	2500
Garm SE	Transformer repair & installation	\$6,394	850
Uzbekistan (pilot sites)			
Qaytmas	School #24 repair	\$3,324	500
Rabot	School # 32 repair	\$4,262	660
Chartak	School # 47 repair	\$2,268	1000
Chimyon	Irrigation water delivery system	\$7,088	3400
<i>CAIP leveraged for PCI</i>			
Karayontok	Medical clinic	\$39,238 (6000 CAIP)	2500
Naiman	School roof & sports hall repairs	\$ 9,259 (3478 CAIP)	800
Naiman	Drinking water project	\$20,300 (6000 CAIP)	3000
Pakhtabuston	Gas pipeline construction	\$22,500 (6000 CAIP)	2375
Total		\$58,249 CAIP	27,085

*Includes a minimum 30% community match (in cash or in kind). In many cases, our communities have reached 45-50% match.

Table 3 summarizes priorities of the communities for first and second-round projects:

Community	Project 1	Project 2
Tajikistan		
Birlyash	Auto bridge construction	Transformer
Shaartuz	Transformer repair	TBD
Beshtemir	Transformer repair	Canal cleaning
Pakala	Health Center repair	Canal cleaning
Oktyabr	School remodeling	Road repair
Bahor	Cafeteria renovation/construction	Teahouse remodeling/repair
Kizil Ketmen	Canal construction	Transformer repair
Komsomol	Canal construction	Transformer repair
Garm NW	Toilet construction	Teahouse remodeling/repair
Garm SE	Transformer repair	Toilet construction
Khoit	School remodeling	Hospital bath construction
Khilmony	Walking bridge construction	Grain processor
Nimich	Transformer repair	Drinking water
Kochon	Bridge construction	Youth center repair
Sari Kenji	Transformer repair	TBD
Uzbekistan		
Mustaquillik	Gas supply rehabilitation	Drinking water
Uzbekiston	Paving road with asphalt	Drinking water
Besharik	Drinking water system	Road paving
Sohil (1)	Gas supply	Drinking water
Nowobod/Yangiarik	Medical clinic repair	Kindergarden construction
Yangi Chorsu	Community center repair	Sports facility construction
Takalik	School repair	Gas supply
Qozi Ahror	Paving road with asphalt	Drinking water
5 Yilli Mustaquillik	Drinking water system	TBD
Qoraqorgon	Gas supply	Bridge construction
Obod	Gas supply	Drinking water
Sohil (2)	Sidewalk construction	Drinking water
Turkmenistan		
Turkmenabat	Primary school #15 repair	TBD
Turkmenabat	Secondary School for the Arts repair	TBD
Turkmenabat	Drug rehabilitation center (lathe workshop)	TBD
Galkynysh	Galkynysh Regional Hospital (sewage system)	TBD

In Uzbekistan, the three pilot projects in Namangan Oblast have been successfully completed, and served as a learning tool for community mobilization using an institutional approach like that used in Turkmenistan, where an initiative group is formed around an institution rather than a community. The pilot project in Ferghana Oblast (Chimyon) has begun, and is due to be completed in the first week of December. The experience gained from this project has allowed for smooth project planning and implementation in the 12 CAIP sites, and has taught valuable lessons about working with community groups and the procurement process.

In the course of our work with communities, CAIP has noted trends in the types of projects being proposed in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In Tajikistan, more than 50% of CAIP communities listed electrical transformers as either the first or second priority project. In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, not a single community has listed electrical transformers, even as the fifth or sixth priority project. In Uzbekistan, 50% of communities identified gas or water as their top two priorities (25% water, 25% gas in first round; 25% gas, 33% water in second round).

With regard to employment issues, unemployment has been raised by 80 percent of the Uzbekistan CAIP communities during the consensus workshops. The issue is usually raised during the SWOT analysis of the community (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). However, when the meeting shifts from SWOT analysis to a discussion of potential community projects, the employment issue is rarely addressed, as communities find it difficult to envision a project which would create employment opportunities in their communities within the parameters of CAIP. Nonetheless, in 17 percent of Uzbekistan CAIP communities, creating new jobs persisted into the discussion of potential CAIP projects, and was identified as a high priority.

Youth centers or sports facilities have been proposed by 50 percent of CAIP communities in Uzbekistan, but such projects have received very few votes when it comes time to select the first and second priority projects. The likely reason for this is that the urgent needs for gas and water infrastructure projects overshadow the needs for more socially-oriented youth and sports activities in most CAIP communities. However, since CAIP is making a three-year investment in communities, we anticipate that social issues will be addressed after the acute infrastructure problems have been solved.

The one type of social project which is being prioritized, even relative to gas and water, is schools. Twenty-five percent of Uzbekistan CAIP communities identified the need to build either a school or a kindergarten, and in one case, both. In Tajikistan, about 25 percent of CAIP communities selected school repair or youth center as a first or second project.



3. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

3.1 *Staff and Structure*

CAIP is being implemented in Khatlon Oblast and in Raasht Valley in Tajikistan, in Lebap Velayat in Turkmenistan, and in all three oblasts in the Ferghana Valley in Uzbekistan. Sub-offices have been set up, and the hiring of mobilization team members has been completed.

Consistent with Mercy Corps' emphasis on cost savings and lean overheads, CAIP has attempted to share spaces and resources whenever possible. This model starts at the Project Implementation Office in Tashkent (Chief of Party, Deputy Chief of Party, and Youth Mobilization Officer) which shares staff and space with Mercy Corps' Uzbekistan Country Office.

Attachment 6 provides an overview of sub-office location and staffing for CAIP. In all three countries, offices are being maintained close to the project sites to ensure close and timely collaboration with communities. Community mobilization teams provide an ongoing link with those communities. CAIP community teams are responsible for conducting community workshops, providing technical advice and consultations. These teams ultimately have responsibility for the implementation of projects including overseeing procurement, working with vendors and suppliers, and reporting on project progress.

The teams interact and collaborate with each community through Community Action Groups, bodies comprised of active citizens that have been elected by the community, as well as through informal and structured meetings with the larger community. The structure of these groups differs among the three countries, as will have been explained in our section on the community mobilization process.

Tajikistan

CAIP Tajikistan maintains a small program staff in Dushanbe, while sharing administrative and finance systems and staff with other Mercy Corps programs. Similar shared arrangements are in place in Khatlon Oblast (city of Shaartuz) and in Raasht Valley (city of Garm). In each area, a full-time administration/finance officer is charged with ensuring proper and timely documentation.

CAIP community teams are comprised of one Community Development Officer (CDO) and one engineer. Each team has primary responsibility for a designated number of communities. However, joint training and the sharing of experiences between teams has enhanced the quality of community mobilization in Tajikistan.

- Two teams are working with communities in Khatlon Oblast;
- Three teams are placed in Raasht Valley;

- One Senior Community Mobilization Officer and one Senior Engineer, both based in Dushanbe, are assigned to assist field teams in both project regions on a flexible as-needed basis.

Turkmenistan

CAIP Turkmenistan is managed from its office in Turkmenabat. In this arrangement, CAIP shares office facilities with the Civil Society Support Center, also a USAID funded project implemented by Counterpart Consortium.

At present, CAIP employs seven full-time and four part-time support staff, among which are three full-time CDOs, and two full-time project engineers/monitors. The staff is multi-ethnic, reflecting the mix of Turkmen, Uzbek and Russian populations in the target communities.

CAIP Turkmenistan also maintains a full time office manager in the capital of Ashgabat. The Ashgabat office serves as a logistical center and as a liaison office for relations with the national government and other national and international organizations.

Uzbekistan

In order to provide close and ongoing support for the mobilization work in the Uzbekistan part of the Ferghana Valley, Mercy Corps has an office in each oblast. The current configuration minimizes travel time for the teams and maximizes time spent in the communities. Each CAIP team consists of three CDOs, one of which has considerable engineering or technical experience.

- In Andijan, our main field office, CAIP and PCI share office facilities, as well as administrative, financial and support staff for valley activities. This is also home-base for the CAIP Rehabilitation Manager, and one CAIP team;
- The Ferghana City sub-office is base for the Community Mobilization Manager and for two CAIP teams assisted by two support staff;
- The Namangan City sub-office serves as the base for one team and has one support staff employee.

3.2 Continuous Capacity-Building



Capacity building, for both CAIP national staff and the CAGs is a fundamental part of the CAIP project. In the first six-months of CAIP implementation, significant time was devoted to building-up the skills of CAIP CDOs for the community outreach activities. Although the majority of our staff have experience in community work, few had direct experience with facilitation or participatory methods. An intensive 5-day training workshop on action-learning and participatory methodology was conducted with all newly hired Community Development Officers in all three countries in August, including PCI staff and expatriate CAIP/PCI managers. The training concluded with a Consensus Workshop in a pilot

community, and selection of a first-round project. This training has ensured that staff are well-grounded in CAIP's overall community mobilization approach.

Additional training has been held for CAIP CDOs in techniques of Participatory Rapid Appraisal, which was conducted by experienced PCI mobilizers. In Uzbekistan, CDOs have requested one training session per month on a different topic, which gives the four teams an opportunity to meet and assist each other in confronting the challenges they face in the day-to-day work. Training has included project planning, procurement, and management, skills-building workshops on the inclusion of youth, techniques of participatory community involvement, project documentation and success stories, and mentoring.

Capacity-building for CAGs is also underway, taking advantage of experiential learning techniques – learning by doing. Mercy Corps CAIP's capacity-building approach is based on coaching and mentoring, rather than formal training modules in a classroom setting. Short, on-site trainings are provided on an as-needed basis on such topics as: the project cycle, budgeting, procurement, project management, and CAG guidelines and charters. After the communities have completed one project cycle and have a solid understanding of the process, capacity-building will shift into areas such as transparency and accountability, civic advocacy, and media outreach. Throughout CAIP's capacity-building activities, CDOs and managers constantly assess the absorption capacity of the CAGs for learning new concepts and tools, and tailor the capacity-building activities to meet current needs of the community.

3.3 Monitoring and Reporting

In addition to submitting the semi-annual report as required by the Cooperative Agreement, we have welcomed the opportunity to share our progress with USAID on an on-going basis.

- In Tajikistan, weekly reports are being submitted, and regular meetings held with USAID Tajikistan staff;
- In Turkmenistan, monthly Donor's Meeting attended by USAID supplements the bi-weekly reporting to USAID Turkmenistan on specific Turkmen matters;
- In Uzbekistan, the USAID Andijan office staff has ensured on-going contact in the Ferghana Valley through regular visits to CAIP communities with field teams;
- For CAIP in general, bi-weekly reporting to and meeting with the Cognizant Technical Officer have provided a regular framework for advice and dialogue on larger and smaller issues that have come up during this early phase.

CAIP reports are shared with Mercy Corps country offices to ensure that potential ideas and contributions from other projects can be brought to bear on our work.

Mercy Corps continues to support the implementation of the web-based Project Reporting Software (PRS), and is looking forward to its full-scale implementation. A PRS pilot version was installed in the Tashkent office in middle of October covering both CAIP and PCI. In response to our on-going testing results, CHF International has provided us with three consecutive program updates of which the most recent is still being tested.

While data can be entered on-line in Tashkent and in Dushanbe, the quality of our connections in Turkmenabat and Andijan do not yet permit on-line data-entry from these main project offices. For on-line reporting purposes, this will mean some delay in fully updated project information as all data entry is currently being done in Tashkent. CHF International has informed us that an MS ACCESS-based data-entry template for PRS is currently being tested and is expected to be released early January. This template will permit data entry in the field, and speedy e-mail transfer to Tashkent for updating PRS information. While we plan to install and test a faster connection set-up in Andijan, the data-entry template will remain part of our PRS reporting set-up for Turkmenistan.

4. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

CAIP has collaborated on information sharing and co-ordination between implementing agencies and donors in the field to avoid duplication of efforts. Working links have been established and we are in the process of exploring practical ways to collaborate.

4.1 Tajikistan

In Tajikistan, collaborative arrangements cover a broad area of initiatives:

- Mercy Corps signed a Letter of Understanding with UNDP and the Aga Khan Foundation that commits each CAIP Implementing Partner to share information on initiatives in Khatlon Oblast and Raasht Valley. This understanding also covers other Mercy Corps projects on health, agriculture and civil society. We view this arrangement with much enthusiasm, particularly because contacts have already led to planning joint training activities for project staff and collaborating community organizations.
- Mercy Corps maintains contacts with several World Bank funded projects, e.g. the Structural Investment Fund for Raasht Valley, and the Social Protection Reform Grant for Khatlon Oblast, although specific collaborative initiatives have yet to materialize.
- Discussions are ongoing with credit providers such as the National Association of Business Women (NABW) and Oriyon – with whom Mercy Corps has long-standing collaborative ties – as well UNDP and the Aga Khan Foundation to promote credit schemes.



4.2 Turkmenistan

In Turkmenistan, CAIP has been working closely with implementing agencies and donors in Lebap to increase the effectiveness and outreach of community mobilization efforts.

- CAIP has developed a relationship with ACCELS on youth development and leadership. Early results of this collaboration have been a number of joint social activities for youth, and one seminar on youth leadership using CAIP facilitation techniques.

- CAIP has continued its close relationship with the Civil Society Support Center (CSSC), funded by USAID and implemented by Counterpart International that has helped CAIP gain access to the NGO community, particularly in more geographically remote communities. Plans call for CSSC and CAIP to conduct joint staff seminars and training for NGO groups in the region on participatory community work and problem solving.
- CAIP continues to share information with two key UN agencies in Lebak: UNHCR may become a donor and a consulting agency as CAIP enters communities with refugee populations; UNICEF has expressed a desire to contribute to projects concerning women and children's health, and working in the Galkynysh Regional Hospital, and the Drug Rehabilitation Center where CAIP is preparing projects.

4.3 Uzbekistan

In Uzbekistan, CAIP is also pursuing broad-based collaborative efforts on top of the very close collaboration with the PCI project.

- Collaboration with the Mercy Corps-managed Women's Microcredit Program has resulted in a number of initiatives that are designed to cross-feed ideas and help develop communities. In addition to joint staff meetings, microcredit officers attended a community workshop in Kosonsoy in order to understand more fully the parameters and approach of CAIP; CAIP staff will follow credit officers during a day's work, and vice-versa. Plans call for microcredit officers to make presentations on credit opportunities to eligible communities (Namangan, Kosonsoy, Uchkurgan, and Kokand).
- Pending confirmation from the Ministry of Education, ABT/ZDRAV+ will have health educators working in a number of CAIP community schools in Ferghana and Andijan Oblasts.
- CAIP will disseminate information to young people in our Namangan CAIP community about the IREX Internet Access Training Program (IATP). Youth in the community will be able to attend training free-of-charge and do volunteer work in the IATP Center.
- Monthly Ferghana Valley donor meetings ensure that field-driven collaboration can be put into place where appropriate.

5. EXPECTED HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT REPORTING PERIOD¹

Over the next six months, CAIP will build on its current momentum by working closely with communities on implementation of community projects. Whereas the previous six months have largely been focused on capacity-building, community selection, and first-stage mobilization,

¹ A detailed extension of the initial work plan, covering the next six months of project implementation is being submitted separately.

attention is increasingly being turned towards community project implementation and CAG capacity-building.

- ***Inclusion of Additional Communities:*** Tajikistan: 10 sites giving a total of 25; Turkmenistan: 3 additional sites yielding an end-of-calendar-year total of 5 sites and 4 institutions, an additional 5 sites will be proposed no later than end-of-February 2003; Uzbekistan: 9 sites yielding a total 21 sites.
- ***Community Projects:*** The need for larger infrastructure projects has been raised by communities, and will be explored after the first-round projects are completed. Community needs frequently exceed the typical scale of projects that were anticipated by our Technical Proposal that proposed an average cost of 5,500 USD. We expect to implement fewer, but somewhat larger project in the coming two-and-a-half years. In addition, we will work with the communities on the implementation of social projects, following the positive results achieved by PCI.
- ***Community Development Contracts (Business and Institutional):*** We will lay the groundwork for the implementation of Community Development Contracts in December/January and expect to have begun a limited number of development projects by early May when our next Semi-Annual Report is due. Our next Work Plan explains more fully “Development Contracts”, and how they can be managed within the overall community and CAG structure.
- ***Ongoing Capacity-building for Project Staff, Community Groups and Communities:*** In addition to staff development, each national CAIP team will address youth development and social activities, build capacity in communities to design and manage projects, and enhance the ability to voice effectively community concerns.
- ***Evaluation of Project Work in Turkmenistan:*** We propose to evaluate options for project implementation in Turkmenistan together with USAID during January and February 2003. The goal would be to have an evaluation report ready by mid-February.

* * *

The initial six months have built experience for the Mercy Corps CAIP team. During the coming six months, we are ready to widen our community outreach, expand into additional communities, and pursue community development initiatives in communities where we are currently working.

We are looking forward to working with USAID in these endeavors.

Attachment 1: CAIP Results Framework

Attachment 1: CAIP Results Framework

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improved environment for the growth of small-medium enterprises (S.O.1.3)Strengthened democratic culture among citizens and target institutions (S.O.2.1)More effective, responsive and accountable local governance (S.O.2.3)Increased access to quality primary health care in select populations (S.O.3.2)Mitigating potential for conflict (C.O.1)Reducing corruption and gender biases (C.O.2)Expanding opportunity for youth (C.O.3)		
OBJECTIVES	I	II	III
RESULTS	Strengthened Community Participation	Improved Social Services Through Community Decisions	Creation of Short-Term and Sustainable Jobs
METHODOLOGY			
1. Overall Process	Community Mobilization through inclusive participatory processes “Action Planning Methodology” Advice, counseling, training, secondment, mentoring, action learning		
2. Organizational Vehicles	Community Action Group (CAG) Project Implementation Team Business Development Committee		
3. Cooperative Arrangements		Community Rehab: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Memo of Understanding with each communityProject Agreement for each project	Development Contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Business assessments in collaboration with community stakeholdersProject Agreement for each project
4. Procedural Venues		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Terms-of-References (design specifications);Minimum 3 bids;CAIP teams responsible for all cash transactions	
5. Reporting/Monitoring		Reporting: Mercy Corps Monitoring: Community groups in collaboration with MC	
Number of Target Communities	Tajikistan: 25 (Khatlon Oblast, Raasht Valley) Turkmenistan: 10 (Lebap Region) Uzbekistan: 21 (Ferghana Valley)		
FINANCIAL SUPPORT			
CAIP Cash Funds		4,921,000 USD, with the following approximate distribution: Tajikistan: 1,875,000 USD Turkmenistan: 750,000 USD Uzbekistan: 1,617,000 USD	
Matching Contributions		Minimum 30 %	
Potential Other Financial Support		Collaboration with micro-credit institutions, state investment funds, financial development agencies, or donors	

TECHNICAL SUPPORT		Engineering know-how (rehab, construction, environment) On-going training
OTHER SUPPORT	Formal and non-formal training and action learning on a need specific basis covering: Action Planning Methodology, Facilitative Leadership, Civic Advocacy, Strategic Planning, Project Cycle Management, Financial Management and Control, Small Business Management, Micro-credit Lending, Legal Literacy, Youth involvement, Youth-based initiatives, User Association Management, Gender-based initiatives, Public Health.	
PROJECT TYPES		<div> <div> 1. Community Center 2. School 3. Youth Center 4. Health Facility 5. Water Storage 6. Water Distribution 7. Energy Distribution 8. Markets 9. Sanitation System 10. Land Fills 11. Roads/bridges </div> <div> Development Contracts: Strategic combination of infrastructure grants, or combination of infrastructure grants and select business support (with matching commitments) </div> </div>

Attachment 2: CAIP Community Assessment Tool

Expanded and Modified Version of USAID "Tension Index"

SUGGESTED GUIDELINE FOR ASSESSING COMMUNITY CONFLICT/TENSION

Evaluation

Comments

	Not assessed
1	"No" Implication: No apparent evidence of conflict triggers. Conflict not a concern among communities.
2	"Yes, but minor." Implication: Possible evidence of minor sources of conflict.
3	"Yes, to some extent." Implication: Evidence of conflict triggers present. Source of concern.
4	"Yes, to a large extent." Implication: Significant evidence of conflict triggers. Possible violent conflict present. Source of serious concern.
5	"Yes, to a very large extent." Implication: Violent conflict present, or imminent.

Questions

GENERAL OVERVIEW

1	Has the community experienced open conflict, or frequent physical confrontations between residents during the past two years (e.g. scrambles at the markets, or at "queueing points", demonstrations directed at other groups in the community, and the like)?
2	Has the community been affected by major factory closures?
3	Is general unemployment rising?
4	Is youth unemployment rising?
5	Has the community experienced large influx of people from surrounding areas, or refugees from other countries or regions?
6	Is there evidence that one or several of the following public services are particularly strained?
a	- Health services?
b	- Schools?
c	- Housing/land for residence?
d	- Drinking water supply?
e	- Energy supply?
f	- Irrigation systems?

g - Transportation to nearest center (with a market, employment opportunities, or special medical facilities)?

7 Is there evidence of resource mis-management as regards,

a - State-owned enterprises

b - Public housing

c - Physical capital

d - Municipal services

e - Public land

f - Other [please specify] _____

8 Is there evidence of inequitable treatment of all citizens by the authorities based upon one or several of the following factors?

a - Long-term residents vs. New-comers?

b - One ethnic group vs. Another?

c - Residents vs. Refugees/displaced persons?

d - More affluent vs. Less affluent?

e - Devoted believers or "faithful" vs. Others

f - One "clan" vs. Another "clan"?

9 Is there evidence of tension between any of the following groups?

a - Long-term residents vs. New-comers

b - One ethnic group vs. Another

c - Residents vs. Refugees/Displaced Persons

d - More affluent vs. Less affluent

e - Devoted believers or "faithful" vs. Others

f - One "clan" vs. Another "clan"

10 Does housing/residential areas show sign of segregation, or is there evidence that the community is moving towards such pattern?

11 Has the crime rate been rising during the past 2 - 4 years?

12 Are there facilities for youth activities?

a - Sports facilities?

b - Youth center?

c - Internet cafes?

d - Donor-funded activities?

A. INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

1 Police

a. Community members respect the authority of the police.

b. Police respect the rights of the community members

c. Treatment of community members by the police is equitable.

2 Judiciary

a. Community members know about and understand the role and procedures of judicial institutions.

b. The courts ensure the timely adjudication of disputes

c. Laws and regulations are applied fairly and impartially by courts

3 Military
a. Community members are able to differentiate between police and military.
b. The community is experiencing the presence of military.
4 Elections
a. Community members understand democratic processes
b. Community members are freely able to participate in elections
5 Municipal Government
a. Community members understand the role of local government
b. Municipal government is democratically legitimate
c. Municipal government officials promote the participation of community in planning and implementation of projects.
d. Municipal government ensures provision of public services for community basic needs
e. Municipal government ensures equal access to local government services
f. Municipal governments procurement practices equitable and transparent
6 Media
a. Media reporting reflects the ethnic diversity in the community
b. Community members perceive they have free and open access to unbiased information.
7 Civil Society
a. Civil society organizations understand their role in the community
b. The activities of civil society organization directly benefit the community
c. Community members participate voluntarily in civil society organizations
8 Religious Groups
a. Local religious authorities represent the interests of their constituents
b. Community members are able to participate freely in religious activities
9 Education
a. Education is available in appropriate languages
b. Children continue schooling beyond the primary level
c. Parents participate in discussions surrounding education and in school activities
10 Health Care
a. Community members have equitable access to health care
b. Community members are able to access health insurance
B. ECONOMIC
1 Local Economy
a. The local economy is based on a diverse representation of size and types of businesses
b. The local economy is stable or growing relative to the norm for the country
c. Investment in the local economy is healthy
d. Amount of trade and business among diverse groups
e. Credit is available on the basis of business credentials
f. Credit is available on terms that are considered a "fair market proposition" relative to the norm for the country
g. Tax assessments of businesses are considered (tough but) fair relative to the norm for the country
h. Monitoring of business compliance with other rules and regulations are enforced in a uniform manner

Factors related to "grey economy"
i. Households rely on non-registered economic activities to make ends meet
j. State authorities are directly involved in the "grey economy" as much as anybody else
k. State-owned enterprises (managers, key employees) are directly involved in the "grey economy" as much as anybody else
l. Individuals/households have accumulated wealth (cars, houses, house-outfittings, etc) that is difficult to explain by any legal economic activity
2 Employment
a. Access to employment opportunities is equitable regardless of ethnic origin
b. Local business respect workers' rights
3 Income Disparity
a. Income levels are in line with the norm for the country
b. Income disparity by education level and ethnicity is in line with the norm for the country
C. TOLERANCE & RADICALIZATION
1 Social Interaction
a. Ethnic interaction at community events is promoted
b. Cultural establishments in the community dissuade participation along ethnic lines
c. Public transportation is used freely and openly by all ethnic groups
d. Store and restaurants are open and accessible to all
e. Radio, TV and newspapers are pro-active in efforts to promote integration
2 Armed Extremism
a. No reported or visible evidence of massing of arms exists
b. No reported or visible signs of militia groups forming exists
c. No reported or visible evidence of attacks on police have exists
D. POPULATION MOVEMENTS
a. School children attend school without fear of retribution
b. IDPs from outside the community are accepted and integrated into daily life
c. IDPs originally from the community feel secure to return home
d. Farmers are working and producing according to community norms
e. Neighborhoods are ethnically mixed

Attachment 3: Community Profile Template

Community Profile

Last updated: _____

Region/Velayat/Oblast:

City/Town/Village Cluster/Community:

Paired City/Town/Village [applicable only to PCI]:

Population:

Population Density:

Nearest city?

Agricultural/industrial; types of industry?:

What capacity are factories working at?

Ethnic composition (homogenous or mixed):

- Uzbek:
- Tajik:
- Russian:
- Kyrgyz:

Presence of Colleges and/or Universities:

No. of young people (19 – 25 years of age):

Unemployment among young people (estimate):

Source of tension²:

Projects currently implemented by other donors?

NGOs and CBOs active in the community:

Recommendation:

Sources of information for “Desk Study”:

Site visit planned/completed?:

² Consult as checklist MC CAIP *Community Assessment Tool*.



Building Consensus

A Mercy Corps CAIP Project Story

Like countless other communities in the Ferghana Valley, in Obod, a small neighborhood of Kosonsoy, Uzbekistan, problems seem endless, and answers are scarce at best. When Mercy Corps' CAIP (Community Action Investment Program) empowered residents to prioritize problems and choose solutions, their first real challenge and success ironically was this process itself, and maintaining the sense of community that this empowerment could so easily have divided.

Obod is a mahalla with more than 4,000 residents, seventy percent of whom are ethnic Tajiks, making up one of many minority enclaves within Uzbekistan. With no primary school within walking distance, no public transportation, no electric lines, a poor supply of drinking and irrigation water, high unemployment, no telephone lines and no gas lines to residents at a higher elevation, Obod was an obvious choice for CAIP assistance. The only challenge would be empowering residents to cooperate in choosing and addressing these issues together.

By using a participatory technique that has residents first identify and articulate community strengths and weaknesses, as well as needs and dreams, the CAIP team was able to lead Obod residents to identify solutions to these problems, in the form of projects. After discussing these issues as a group, the 40 men, women, and youth from all walks of life then voted on which projects they should work with Mercy Corps on first. This is where things became interesting.



After the overwhelming majority of people in the room voted in favor of a proposed gas line to homes at a higher elevation, a handful of residents became visibly angry and started to protest. It was not that they were upset about few votes for their water project, but that they represented a significant portion of the town that lived without access to water. The anger was justifiable, as few in the room were residents of this area. Half way through our first meeting with local residents, it became apparent that our CAIP team had overlooked a preexisting tension in their assessment, and therefore had not invited a

truly representational group to speak for the community.

As the community became increasingly divided, a second meeting was arranged, and the CAIP team personally delivered invitations to residents from all areas of town. Despite the effort, between the first and second meeting, the rift in the community seemed to grow wider.

When the CAIP team arrived for that event, they were shocked to find that the elected mahallah leader had uninvited the residents from other areas of town, and presented consensus based on a meeting he organized the night before. Frustrated, dismayed, but still determined, the CAIP community mobilizer apologized for their assessment's oversight, again reaffirmed Mercy Corps' desire to assist with a series of projects, and reinforced the selection criteria. With a firm explanation, she refocused the discussion on the larger task at hand, and led the group to agree upon a truly representational meeting for a good faith effort to work together and find consensus.

The community responded. The next day's meeting held the breakthrough so many had been waiting for. After individuals from all areas of town gathered to discuss the issues openly, many projects received consideration, in addition to the water and gas proposals. Women and elderly citizens in attendance helped guide the discussion, and a genuine commitment to the community was displayed by all present. When the votes were tallied, the gas project had beaten the water project by one single vote, but the CAIP team expressed their hope to see both ideas realized. The community genuinely seemed to endorse the result.

The meeting went so well in fact, that the small representative group which was nominated to steer the project's management asked if they could stay late and begin to lay down the project's framework. Although the community had come close to losing its cohesiveness, in the end they found their own direction based on democratic principles. Though the projects are still in the early stages of development, the town has already begun to build a dialogue and are slowly coming to understand each other. It is Mercy Corps' hope that those projects far outlast the ones built with brick and mortar.



Birlyash Mobilization & Project Prioritization CAIP Tajikistan

September 14, 2002



Mobilizer Zaidulo Nurdinov

The first CAIP/ Tajikistan mobilization took place in the village of Birlyash (pop. 4560), 6 km from Shaartuz City Center in Southern Tajikistan. A representative group of some 50 residents of the village participated, and at the end of the day had prioritized the top 9 projects that they felt were the most important for their community. Among the top choices were 1. Installation of a new energy transformer, 2. New drinking water wells, 3. A walking bridge over the canal so inhabitants don't have to walk the extra 1.5 km to work, and 4. Refurbishing



9 tables of group work

the Mercy Corps/ USAID contribution, what types of projects can be chosen, and how CAIP and the community will work together to accomplish these projects.

Trainer Gary Forbes began the workshop with a "Participatory Community Assessment" which allowed the participants to voice the successes, problems, and hopes of their community. From this, people could stand up, and voice things they were proud of in their community, for example, the Presi-



Mobilization Manager Erik Owen

the old school gym for a new youth center. Khotlan Oblast Mobilizer Zaidulo Nurdinov began the day by welcoming the participants and briefly introducing CAIP. The community leaders gave a short welcome as well, and then Dr. Henrik Jess, CAIP Chief of Party gave a general CAIP overview. Tajikistan Mobilization Manager Erik Owen then explained how CAIP Tajikistan will work, a brief explanation of how communities can match



Organizing problems in the community

dent of Tajikistan had in the last year personally visited Birlyash. And from the beginning, it was obvious that the power transformer was one of the highest priorities for Birlyash from what they said about problems in their community.

Mr. Forbes led the group in defining major problems in the community. Group work at the tables produced over 40 4-5 word concerns that were cate-



Groups designing projects

gorized by the community themselves into 9 main concerns. For example, all water concerns were put under category 1, all energy concerns under category 2, etc. Each table took one of these categories and began designing a project to meet the needs defined.

Mr. Forbes explained the requirements designing the project: 1. Should improve overall community life, 2. Participation & support from the community, 3. Mercy Corps will provide up to \$2000 for this initial confidence building project, 4. The community will provide a minimum of 30% of the total project cost which can be counted in man power, materials, money, etc.

A representative from each group presented the finished project, who the beneficiaries would be, how the community would contribute the 30% match, and how the project would be sustainable. After presentation of all projects, each participant was given 2 small red stickers. They wrote their top two choices on them and gave them to the mobilizers who matched them with the project that had been voted for.

The community then, through the process of nomination chose an 8 person Project Implementation Team to begin immediately on the top project. Since the project chosen was to install a new or remodeled energy transformer, the team included people from the community who might have special skills in this field. A meeting was set for September 15 to further discuss the implementation with the CAIP engineers.

Throughout the process of the mobilization, diversity was emphasized in gender, profession, ethnicity, and age. Transparency in not only the prioritization of the projects, but the implementation, monitoring and future sustainability is essential to the CAIP concept of community capacity building and constructive dialogue among community members.



Filling out the 4 section project sheet



Group 1 presenting their project



Voting with the "Red Sticker Method"



Two schoolteachers after the Mobilization

Appendix 6: CAIP Structure and Offices

